

Report on Meeting to Discuss Anti-Social Behaviour held at Chepping Wycombe Parish Council Office On 20th January 2006

Attendees: Dominic Grieve MP [Chair],
Members of Chepping Wycombe Parish Council
Representatives from Flackwell Heath, Loudwater, and
Penn & Tylers Green Residents' Associations, and local Neighbourhood
Watch Representatives.

Dominic Grieve opened the meeting by saying that it had had been convened by Chepping Parish Council to discuss anti-social behaviour. He then gave a short overview of his role as Shadow Attorney General, and his views on anti-social behaviour, stating that he felt ASBOs to be ineffective. Following a visit to America, he believed that some States coped successfully with this problem, as their police officers were seen on the streets and built up relationships with residents. However, he felt the meeting belonged to the parishes, and threw it open to attendees to raise any points they wished to discuss.

Low Level of Policing

Loudwater Forum raised serious concerns at the low level of a visible police presence in the village, with virtually no community policing. There was no such thing as the beat policeman. The **FHRA** representatives confirmed this concern. The **FHRA** representatives also complained that the police presence was usually reactive rather than proactive, and always after the event. As a result of this, neither petty crime nor traffic issues were being dealt with effectively.

Communications with Thames Valley Police

The **FHRA** expressed concern at the constant changing of officers within **Thames Valley Police**, making communications, and the following up of issues raised, very difficult. **Dominic Grieve** stated much of the problem was the movement of staff to other Police Authorities, particularly **The Metropolitan Police**, where the rates of pay were higher.

P C Hearmon

Loudwater Forum raised the issue of **P C Pete Hearmon**, and most village representatives were not at all satisfied with his performance. Although the **FHRA** had passed a motion of no confidence in him last year, all the targets set for him by his superiors had been met. The **FHRA** stated that they were still unsure where the problem lay; whether it was the policeman himself, or possibly the system, which involved him being taken out of the area to cover other situations. It was agreed that the police force was under-resourced.

The **FHRA** commented that they have regular bi-monthly meetings with **P C Pete Hearmon**; he attends their Police and Traffic Group Meetings when he answers questions, and provides statistics. The regular concern is the lack of a police presence, and the lack of resources, which has meant that he is committed to spending much of his time in higher crime areas. The **FHRA** said that they have been instrumental in Beat Surgeries being arranged by **P C Pete Hearmon**, which will be

held in Flackwell Heath over the next few months. Due to the lack of advertising, it will probably mean a lack of attendance, making residents appear apathetic.

PCSOs

The introduction/recruitment of **PCSOs** has been slow, and the **FHRA** felt that although there had been some initial presence and success, due to the large area covered by just two **PCSOs**, their impact was lessening. The **Parish Council** had considered a request to provide the capital for a **PCSO** (which would cost £27k plus a £5,000 set up charge), but this would not guarantee his/her presence in local areas. This cost could not be justified, and was therefore rejected. Loudwater Forum felt very strongly that the funding of PCSOs from Parish Council funds was wrong, considering the high proportion of Council Tax that residents were already paying to Thames Valley Police.

South Bucks LPA

Dominic Grieve explained that he was aware of the difficulties experienced by the **South Bucks Police area**, and that the system they had recently introduced, involving local accountability, local public meetings and the supply of local crime statistics, was proving to be successful. It seemed to him that **Wycombe LPA** had not been communicating with local residents at the grassroots level. **Loudwater Forum** asked **Dominic Grieve** what they could do to improve matters. The **FHRA** stated that they were trying to arrange a meeting with **Thames Valley Police**, to enable them to explain the impact of Challenge and Change, the TVP reorganisation that is due to be in place in 2007.

Conclusion

As the entire meeting had revolved round police issues, **Dominic Grieve** felt that the way forward would be for him to arrange a meeting with senior police officers at **Wycombe LPA**. He felt that all the representatives were justified in complaining about the lack of police presence, and should have dedicated police officers to cover this area.

He promised to report back after this meeting. He also said that he could be contacted by e-mail and encouraged communication with him and his office.

DO/BG/LF